1641


# Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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*"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!*
*Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;*
*And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."*

JOHN HAY.

## Mr. Hanson Defines Wrong.

*To the Editor of Liberty:*

In your comments on my letter which you kindly publish in Liberty, No. 261, you ask: Why is an injury a wrong? My answer is as follows:

I AM antedates might, contract, and social conduct. The sovereignty of the individual is therefore supreme. Hence self-preservation is the first law of nature. Consequently any act done by another which invades the life, liberty, or property of the individual is immediately felt to be more or less destructive of self. Hence the natural rebellion and revenge which arise in the mind of the invaded. This is nature's testimony that a wrong is done. And a wrong is an injury that militates against social peace and happiness. This answers your question, and also establishes the facts of right and wrong, and morals.

If I kill wild rabbits or deer for food, and some one steals them, or robs me of them, he is a thief or robber. In like manner, if I squat on vacant land and use it to gain my livelihood, and some one having superior strength drives me off, he is a robber and virtually a murderer. These acts are anti-social and therefore immoral and criminal. Persistent invasion of liberty is the cause of war, bloodshed, compromise, and contract. They are the inevitable effect of invasion, and not the cause of liberty and justice.

When two thinkers can't agree on the same premise, successful debate is impossible. This closes my case.

I have one word more to say, *viz.:* When you deny right and wrong, and yet use the word right eight times in your last paragraph, you are self-contradictory and absurd. I take the liberty of reconstructing your paragraph as follows:

"Before contract is might. Contract is the voluntary suspension of might. The power secured by such suspension we may call a social privilege. These two social forces—might and contract—are the only forces that ever have been or can be. So-called morals have no existence."

Prove your postulate. The burden rests on you.

WM. HANSON.

[I asked Mr. Hanson to tell me why an injury is a wrong. He answers me that an injury is a wrong because a wrong is an injury. How very satisfactory! All the Moralists reason in a vicious circle, and Mr. Hanson is no exception to the rule. He differs from the others only in this,—that, while they usually make the circle of immense circumference in the hope that by the time the traveller gets around to the starting-point again he will have forgotten that he was ever there before, Mr. Hanson, being as honest as he is tall, selects a short circuit and whisks you around it with three strides of his long legs. Thus he gives himself away. There is no escaping the realization that there has been no advance. And yet in one sense we have gained a little. Now at least we know what Mr. Hanson means by a wrong. A wrong, by his definition, is "an injury that militates against social peace and happiness." Very well; if such is the definition of a wrong, then I have not denied that there is such a thing as wrong. On the contrary, I have been at express pains to divide conduct into two classes,—one that militates against social peace, and one that does not so militate. But what has this to do with moral obligation? If we take Mr. Hanson's definition of wrong, I have denied, not wrong, but the obligation to refrain from wrong. To one of my questions Mr. Hanson has given an answer, such as it is. But my other questions he does not touch. I asked him, not only why an injury is a wrong, but why one man is bound to refrain from injuring another; what obligation, apart from motives of expediency, there is upon him to refrain; why a man who does not care for society should respect the essential conditions of society. On none of these points does he afford me the smallest ray of light. And yet, until these questions are answered, Mr. Hanson and the Moralists are beaten. For he is wrong in supposing that the burden rests upon the Egoists. Not so. The Egoists have the negative side of this debate. The Moralists declare that there is an obligation upon us to do thus and so. We deny and call for proof. The proof not forthcoming, we are victors. As for Mr. Hanson's reconstruction of my paragraph, I will cheerfully accept it, if such acceptance will give him any satisfaction. But from the paragraph as I wrote it it was obvious that I used "right of might" and "right of contract" in distinction from "moral rights." Now, it is only moral rights that I deny.—EDITOR LIBERTY.]

## Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

*7.—Collectivism. The Facts Speak.*

[Continued.]

The manner in which industrial corporations and political rings own American city governments for their own emolument at the cost of the public requires no enlargement here. Like the brigands and pirates of former times they swoop down upon the unwitting and defenceless people, not with pistol and dagger, but by the more insidious and no less dangerous methods of political manipulation and legal imposition in the guise of majority rule. They contaminate everything they touch; incapacity marks every act, dishonesty all their dealings. No city, large or small, escapes. Philadelphia has its gas ring and jobbery in all departments, creating a state of chronic scandal; New York its boodlers and Tammany rings; Chicago, perpetual corruption and rascality in its government and administration; Boston has its West End Railroad Company, which not only makes puppets of those in power and buys the silence of the press, but is commonly said to have in its pay the whole State legislature. Every city presents no less conclusive testimony. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain recently proved in the "Forum" that the best governed (?) big city in the States, Boston, requires five times as much money to run the government as a city of equal size, Birmingham, in England, and at the same time fails to give anywhere near as much return in efficiency and services to the citizens. Yet English municipal organizations are less open to objection, either on principle or on practical achievement, than their American counterparts. Before the advocates of "municipalization" and "nationalization" can make out a claim for serious attention to their schemes, they must furnish evidence to rebut the almost overwhelming testimony which demonstrates the utter failure, moral and industrial, of all existing manifestations of practical authoritative Socialism. In default, their demands are unworthy of notice and their proposed reforms abortive. It is not, however, the theories of these schools alone which have to be disproved; the principles they uphold have entered largely into practical politics, and there exists a body of opinion, to all appearance on the increase, which sees nothing but good for the people in the indefinite expansion of the principle of compulsory collectivism. Thus we may observe continuous efforts to show that every time a new function is assumed by the authorities, as the supplying of light in cities, a cheapening of the commodity to the people is effected. Prices of the municipal product are compared with those of private companies, and sometimes the latter are shown to be higher. But it is nearly always forgotten that private corporations carrying on such operations do so in accordance with franchises obtained from the authorities which choke off competition and virtually create the closest of monopolies. Where exclusive rights exist, the benefits of free industry need not be looked for; the choice in such cases lies between a private and a public monopoly, either of which is a direct infringement on individual liberty and clearly unjust.

An erroneous assumption underlies this desire for enlarging public or common property and organization of labor. It is assumed that the profits accruing to private enterprise, to the capitalists, out of business which might be run socialistically, would in the latter circumstance go directly into the collectivist treasury and be used for the general good. Of what do such profits consist? Chiefly interest; yet the collectivists are willing that the authorities take over these functions and pay interest for the necessary capital. True, they imagine that interest would speedily be abolished by some legal enactment or popular *plebiscite*. But no sound conception of economic principles will admit the efficacy of such methods. Nevertheless, this desire is a tacit admission that the elimination of interest is an essential feature of economic reform, while it must always be insisted that no merely political method can permanently secure this desirable result.

The other factors usually included in profits arising either out of risk, superior facilities, or skill in management could not by any possibility be transferred to the collective authority. With the substitution of industrial Socialism for voluntary enterprise they would simply cease to exist. The source which created them being destroyed, society would be just so much the poorer. And the evidence is against the belief that collectivism would enrich the community, by its ability to manage and administer property and enterprise, beyond what competitive effort has proved itself capable of doing. In short, the advocates of the collectivist movement overlook the fact that the earnings of industrial enterprise above the current rate of interest are properly returns for services rendered, and should not be confounded with "the unearned increment" of either interest or rent. An exception to this must be mentioned. In the case of a monopoly a tax may be exacted which,

(Continued on page 3.)

# Liberty.

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*"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Policies, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."*—PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience

## The Lucky Three.

For the list of successful applicants for books see fourth page, it being forced out of its usual position by the necessities of the make-up.

## Spencer and George.—I.

In beginning a few criticisms on the latest book by Henry George, entitled "A Perplexed Philosopher," it will be useful to state the purport of the argument. The introduction offers as a reason that Herbert Spencer—the philosopher in the case—enjoys a great reputation; that in his work on "Justice" he has changed his conclusion on private property in land, now affirming that it should continue; that people are led away by a great reputation: but George will restrict his discussion to Spencer's views related to the subject of landholding. It will be seen that the relation referred to is elastic. Thus George discusses as much as he sees fit of Spencer's views related to theology in order to force into some sort of relation with the land question the question of Spencer's moral obligation to truthfulness and self-sacrifice, or loss thereof by agnosticism. Then at the end of the book in the "moral" of the examination George hopes that the sult may be "to promote freedom of thought." How has he adhered to his introductory resolution?

One inference from this state of case may be that George's introduction was written the first thing; but it is generally understood that introductions are written after the books to which they belong. George's may be no exception after all, for his language on page 6 is:

> I do not propose to discuss Mr. Spencer's philosophy or review his writings, except as embraced in or related to his teachings on one subject.

Writings related to "teachings" on a subject would be writings related to the subject, but George's purpose finds another relation. What then is the sense of the profession that the discussion shall be confined? There is a grave flourish of method about it, but the proponent, George, by not taking what Spencer calls related to one subject, but by taking what the proponent, George, relates to it in any way in his own mind, reserves the facility of making a point anywhere against his foe to weaken his influence. He could have done that frankly, unless his nature is of another kind; but then he could not consistently use that profession that he did not purpose, etc.

George's work is on this plan. first to show by extracts from Spencer's earlier writings that Spencer was zealous at the outset in asserting that land belongs to society and not to individuals, and inviting society to assert its ownership through the State as the general landlord; that Spencer was then uncompromising in tone and eager to see the interest of the individual sacrificed to the will of God, making a virtue of this sentiment in the individual in common with George and all other Moralists. Years later, however, when Spencer had become a famed philosopher and substituted the unknowable and force for God, and evolution for religion, and when the land question was no longer one which the privileged classes could regard as harmless to their interest, however discussed, Spencer avowed that he had reconsidered his earlier views. By degrees he changed until he became a defender of the established order of things landed in Great Britain, and regarded the law of equal liberty as being compromised by accrued claims in the matter of landed estates.

George says a good deal against Spencer's moral degeneracy, and devotes some effort to showing his shiftiness and cowardice.

George also dips into the godless philosophy and gives his readers a few specimens of the way he regards the argument. He does not mention Paley and the watch, but views the wonders of organic life as a steam engine or a telephone. If there is not intelligence visible in the user to account for all he sees, he infers that there was such intelligence in the mechanic.

George does not go into any inductions to offset the observations by which the theory of evolution may be supported. He makes a flying excursion into this domain and gets back to the land question. He winds up with a racy burlesque on Spencer's latest and lamentable position on land-owning and the compensation question, taking for comparison the imagined case of a northern abolitionist who had gone South, become comfortable among slaveholders, and been compelled to make his peace with them or take the consequences of their displeasure.

As Mr. Yarros some weeks ago anticipated, George makes a pitiable mess of attempting to discuss the Synthetic Philosophy,—that is, if one has regard to science, congruity of subjects, and enduring reputation; but the performance may be otherwise viewed if the aim is to make a popular book. It is not clear to my mind that George is of sufficient understanding to be set down as an unmixed humbug in this matter. I am willing to assume that it never occurred to him to think what would be his speculation on design if he found a machine with a contrivance inside operating to destroy the machine or frustrate its normal action.

Having given some account of Henry George's book, I will next present such arguments as strike me in reading certain passages. I shall accuse both Spencer and George of serious oversights, Spencer especially, in his earliest land doctrine, and shall point out that George has said the words necessary to essential corrections, but has failed to follow them up; also that George in this latest work has made certain crucial admissions.

TAK KAK.

## Municipal Meat-Markets—No Meat.

Rio de Janeiro has municipal meat-markets,—a fact which Nationalist papers, for valid reasons, forbear to thrust on our attention in the same way in which other municipal enterprises are held up to our admiration. The Rio de Janeiro meat-market is conducted at a loss, of course, but this signifies nothing. Our own Socialistic post-office is run at a loss, yet the circumstance does not prevent the State Socialists from pointing with pride to it as a beautiful practical lesson in collectivism. Then, although the city is heavily taxed for its meat, it fails to get the meat. This, too, is not altogether incongruous with governmental traditions and usages. We are heavily taxed for our letters, which, though they eventually reach their destination, by no means get regularly and promptly delivered, especially if such delivery happens to interfere with the needful distribution of campaign circulars. The meat-markets are in the hands of incompetent officials, and the system threatens to break down. Ditto with our post-office. The combination of business and politics and spoils has given us a postal service equal to any of the badly-conducted concerns and superior to none of them. We read further that "no proper executive ability has been brought to the conduct of the business, so that there is no regularity about the shipping of cattle to the slaughter-houses or the distribution of meat to the markets; the consequence is that there are days when the city is brought to the verge of famine, though the cattle ranges of the interior are well stocked, and nothing is lacking save an organizing faculty able to get the desired product to the hands of the desiring consumer." All this is familiar. It is the organizing faculty which politics cannot supply and which makes government a wretched business agency. "As the business is made a monopoly by the municipality, no private initiative is allowed to come to the rescue of the distressed inhabitants." You surely don't expect government to undertake to run a business of any kind *without* interdicting competition and making the attempt of private enterprise to engage in that business a criminal offence! To permit competition would manifestly detract from its dignity and endanger its future as a wonderful business manager. "One individual shipper ventured to bring in 370 head of cattle on his own account, but they were promptly confiscated by the city authorities." What commendable zeal and efficiency in enforcing the just and beneficial laws, and punishing shameful law-breakers! The people may suffer some trifling inconvenience from irregular supplies of meat, but the satisfaction of having excellent laws and honest officials must be immense. "Resort has been had to frozen meat imported from the River Platte, as it seems foreign trade of the kind can set the municipal monopoly at defiance." This is the only alarming feature of the whole situation. The evil must be remedied at once. Foreign trade is bad enough when it does not undermine any of the blessings of municipal monopoly, but, when it does, its restriction or total prohibition becomes an imperative necessity. Municipal Socialism is bound to succeed—in something or other; and neither domestic nor foreign trade can be allowed to place the least impediment in its way.

V. Y.

### Merlino's Little Argument.

Merlino writes in "Solidarity" that he does "not care to resent the indecent attacks of such consummate sophists and intolerant libertarians as Messrs. Tucker and Yarros." Manifestly he intends to say that he does not care to *repel* our attacks, since, if he deems them unfair, he cannot but "resent" them. But he wishes "to point out to *bona fide* Individualists that the main issue between us [does Merlino mean between himself and the *bona fide* Individualists, or between himself and Liberty?] seems to be whether we shall advocate an organized, systematic coöperation, or a hap-hazard, a half-and-half one." I warmly congratulate Merlino on this first symptom of intelligence. He is turning in the right direction at last. It is undoubtedly true that the difference, not indeed between his position and that of *bona fide* Individualists, but between his position and ours, is that he advocates an organized, systematic, compulsory cooperation, while we are entirely willing to put up with what he styles a hap-hazard coöperation. "'Give us liberty,' the Individualist says, 'and coöperation is sure to come,'" continues Merlino. "Well, I say, the history of the United States disproves the assertion. The people [this sentence is given the emphasis of italics] there started in many cases from liberty, nay, from a condition of equality or equal liberty, and see the consequences!" More blunders could not well be forced into such a narrow compass; Merlino has certainly put every inch of his space to the maximum economic use. In the first place, either loose thinking or artful dodging is hidden behind the ambiguous words, "in many cases." To say that the *people* here started *in many cases* from liberty is to utter words without any meaning. Merlino does not mean that the people had more freedom — enjoyed a greater number of separate freedoms — at the outset than they can boast of to-day, because he immediately corrects himself by speaking of "a condition of equality or equal liberty"; and no other meaning is possible. Either the people here started from equal liberty, or they did not. If they did not start from equal liberty, then the history of the United States does not disprove the assertion that coöperation would follow the observance of the principle of equal liberty. If they did, then it is pertinent to call upon us to account for the "consequences." But did they? No man who comprehends the true significance of equal liberty would ever venture to advance the claim that the people here at any time enjoyed equal liberty. Merlino's indiscriminate use of terms shows that he confounds equal liberty with equal slavery. The scientific and technical import of the term equal liberty eludes him. The subjects of a despotic government may be said to have equal amounts of liberty, in the sense that no one individual subject is allowed more liberty than any other of his fellow-slaves. In the sense, however, of the highest individual liberty compatible with equality of liberty, equal liberty has never yet found recognition. The people here were freer at the start than other peoples, somewhat nearer to a condition of equal liberty, but equal liberty they never possessed. It follows that the history of the United States does not negative the assertion that coöperation would find equal liberty an admirable soil for its growth. Perhaps all this will appear sophistry to Merlino, but *bona fide* Individualists will cheerfully undertake to disabuse his mind of that notion. By all means, let him sit at the feet of *bona fide* Individualists and learn the import of equal liberty and the lesson the history of this country teaches. The consummate sophists will possess their souls in patience. V. Y.

### How Liberty May Come.

Forecasts are dangerous; yet let us for once consider a little the trend of circumstances. Is it true that everything points to an intensification of authority as the next step of progress, — even a temporary intensification, as a by-path to liberty beyond? So I have sometimes myself thought that it would be; yet a more careful consideration has led me to an opposite conclusion.

The most noticeable characteristic of the present transitional period is the great variety of "reforms" that are agitated, — so great that anything like unanimity in active work has been impossible, scarcely even coöperation toward a common end by two factions.

On the other hand, observe the rally in the reactionary forces.

The churches have not been for many years so jubilant. The Catholic church grows beyond all knowledge. The closely allied Episcopal church tends steadily Romeward, in spite of a minority of liberal tendencies. The ruck of Protestant bodies, without any ground of authority, ignoring dogma and worshipping a vague idea of virtue, are bent more violently than the avowedly authoritarian churches upon forcing us all to do "right." Every Methodist conventicle in the land — and the land is peppered black with them — backs our old friend Wanamaker in his aspirations for sanctity, backs Comstock in his holy activities. Through them we have our coins defaced with a religious inscription. They are never willing to let the religious question rest. They are the last to permit liberty, even liberty of thought or of conscience. Through them we shall shortly have some vile figment of their idolatrous fancy recognized in the Constitution. Through them we are enslaved by unnumbered Sunday laws, Parkhurst laws, recommending stoning the adulterous woman as the proper thing, and all the rest of it. Many even who are out of the churches, never go, believe none of their talk, yet weakly and blindly contribute money to support them, encourage their wives to go, like "she-cattle," to be religious, because they say: "Oh, well, after all, the churches do a great deal of good," not perceiving that the good they do is but an alleviation of the misery which they are the main cause of.

Yet a change is impending.

The reaction is possible because the radical movement is not united. Always, as far as I can recall, before this, the liberal movement of each period has united for some one advance; that accomplished, the liberals, most of them, have opposed themselves to further advances.

But within the churches, and in sympathy with them for awhile though outside of them, is a vast multitude of liberal tendencies and traditions, even though hazy in their ideas.

The revivification of the churches, and associated reactions, will have this result: they will force a remarshalling of the liberal and reactionary hosts. Again it will be authority against do-as-you-please. The authoritarian proclivities of ecclesiasticism will become recognized; by the road of Unitarianism many of the more liberal bodies will disband; others Rome will absorb, by that time probably a State church, in fact if not in name, by virtue of school subsidies and the like. In every way the old struggle for liberty against authority seems likely to revive.

And for what can all reformers of whatever persuasion then fight but for liberty? With a State owning, let us say, the railroads, and refusing to employ any who have not had a common-school course, in common schools where allegiance to the church will be informally infused, as allegiance to the flag and Bible is now, even avowed authoritarians, Nationalists, and Communists will arise in protest and recalcitrancy.

United opinion means renewed tyranny when that opinion gains the upperhand: differences in opinion mean ultimate uniting to defend differences of opinion and the outcoming differences of actions. The real lover of liberty is not inclined, as the profane suppose, to demand liberty for himself to tyrannize over others.

The real lover of liberty dwells little upon the restraints from which he suffers; what inspires him is the desire for liberty for others, which he would be the last to infringe.

In such a defence of liberty, all will be forced to stand together. The unintelligent will have to understand, the vacillating will have to make up his mind, all, in defence of their own liberty, will have to unite against the renewed encroachments of authority.

Never regret that radicals cannot unite upon a programme of action; in their differences lies the hope of liberty, in their union to defend their differences the probable accomplishment of it. JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON.

Elliott F. Shepard is dead. And now there is no one left on earth sufficiently lacking in self-respect to debate with Dan DeLeon.

### Problems of Anarchism.

(Continued from page 1.)

though called profit, is neither interest nor payment for services, but simply an unjust abuse of power. The United States Government, when its shuts out all competitors and charges a rate for letters beyond the cost of that branch of the service and uses the accruing profit to make good the deficit caused by its unsound management of the newspaper and periodical branch, is a pertinent example. We could add also the English post-office and telegraph service, upon which the government raises a large income in the name of profits, but which is truly a tax on the people, and the English municipal authorities, who realize big profits on the gas monopoly which they use in "improvements," whose principal effects are to enhance the value of real estate and increase rents. Unofficial capitalistic monopolies by legislative aid not infrequently do the same thing.

Therefore the one possible benefit which collectivism might be expected to accomplish, — namely, the saving to the producers of that portion of profits which is interest proper, — it offers no promise of effecting. And it has just been shown that the remaining portions would not be saved. Hence we arrive at the conclusion that the claim made on behalf of Socialism to return to the producers the profits now received by the capitalist class is without foundation. The analysis in this chapter harmonizes with the preceding by showing that collective ownership of property and compulsory industrial organization offer no advantages over private property and capitalism. So that, judging only by expediency, by the observed results and the possible benefits, collectivism as a solution of the social problem cannot be entertained. WM. BAILIE.

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#### BIOGRAPHY.

791. William R. Alger. By Fred Winslow Adams. With portrait. Werner's Magazine, March. 5500 words.

792. A Family of Talent — Cynthia Leonard and Her Children. By E. S. W. With portraits. Werner's Magazine, March. 900 words.

* 793. Alphonse Daudet in His Country Home. By Max Maury. Illustrated. Belford's Monthly, March. 2500 words.

794. Benj. F. Butler. Memorial services. Poem by James Jeffrey Roche and eulogy by F. T. Greenhalge. Boston Herald, March 16. 4800 words.

795. Alexander Hamilton. By John Fiske. Brooklyn Eagle, March 15. 1800 words.

† 813. Georg Herwegh, a Poet of Freedom. In German. By Th. Ebner. Nord und Süd, March.

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#### RELIGION.

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#### SEX.

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